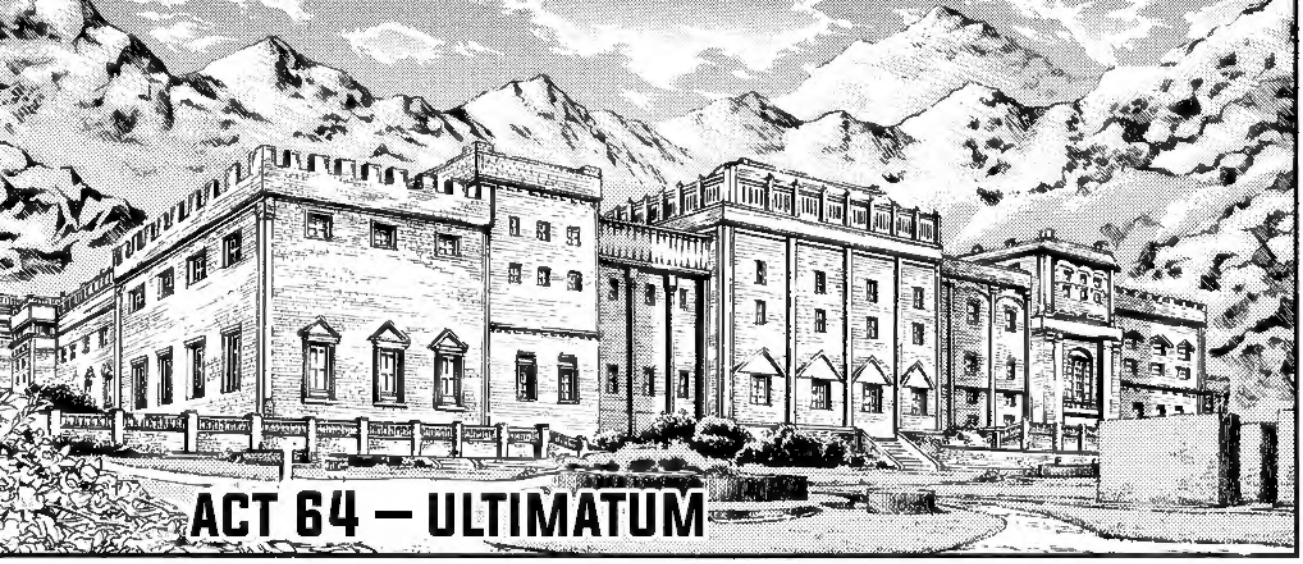


ACT 64 — ULTIMATUM

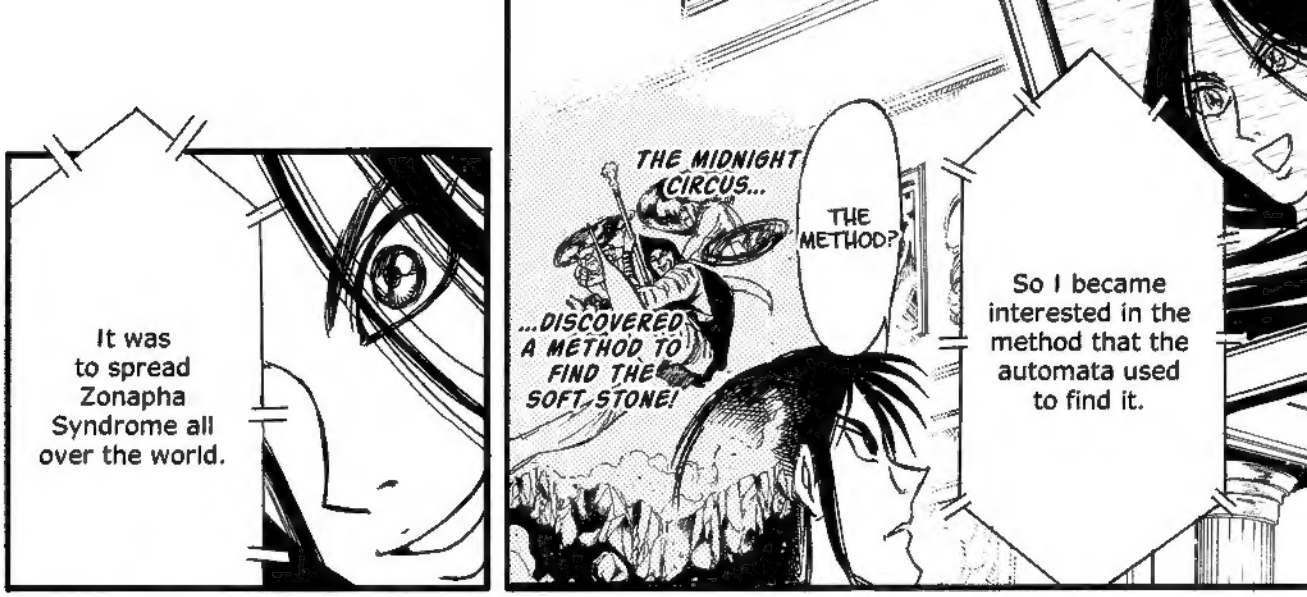
We haven't seen each other since I died saving you in the Sahara Desert.
.....Oh, Narumi. It's been a while.
Guy, huh? The last time we saw each other was when Shouji died back in Kuroga Village. Don't you think it's about time for you to go as well?
Your name's Fou, right? The Shirogane who dropped out to become an engineer. You seem to know quite a lot lot about me.

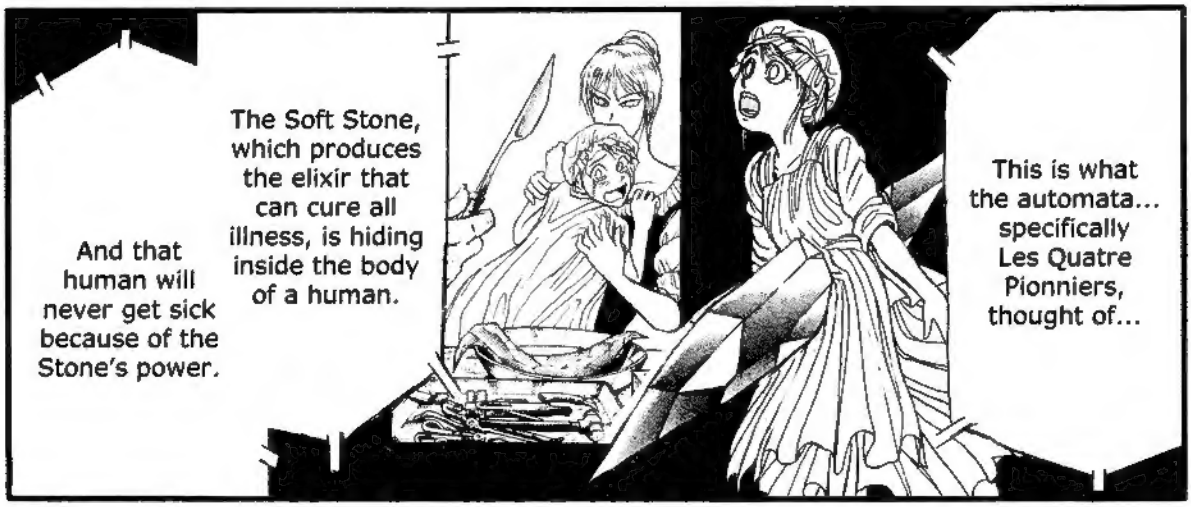
To think I'd see you again looking so handsome.
ACT 64—
ULTIMATUM

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ACTIONS AT ALL.
WHAT WAS THE POINT OF PRETENDING TO BE A SHIROGANE AND GO THERE?
NO, IN FACT...
WHY DID YOU SAVE ME BACK THEN, FACE-LESS...?
Naru-mi...
Hahahah... You see, I'm pretty fickle...

I knew that she later formed the Midnight Circus to go on a journey, searching for the Soft Stone in order to be able to laugh for me.
When I realized that Doll Francine couldn't laugh like a human, I got rid of her.

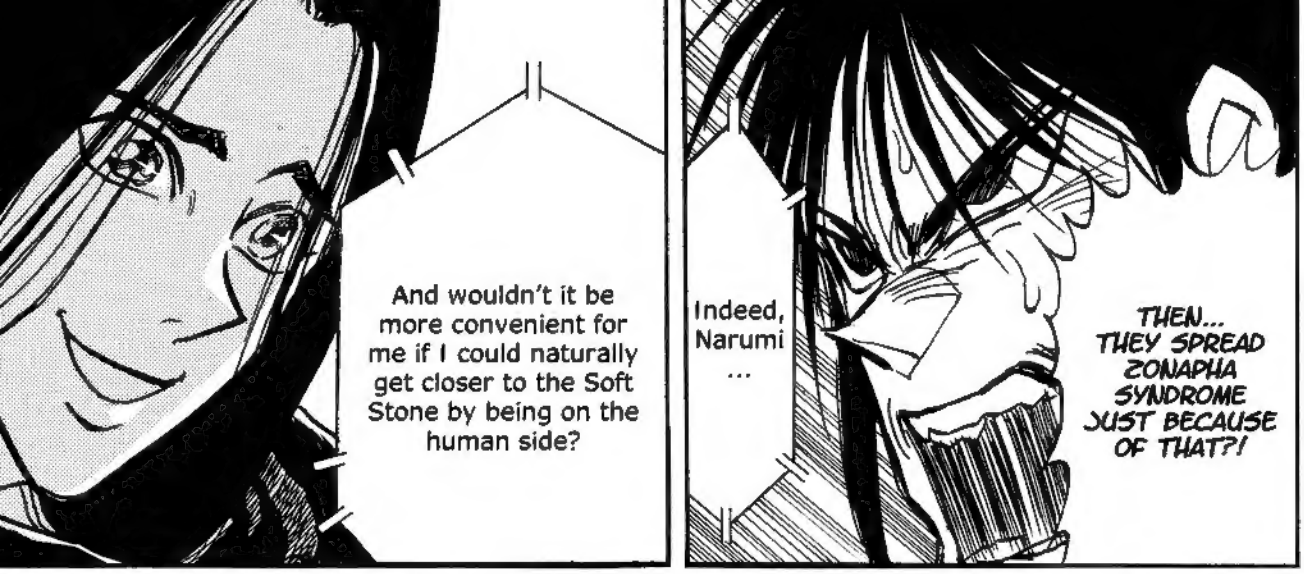
Whatever you say, Guy. Anyway, I also wanted the Soft Stone. It was necessary for my plan.
WHAT A WICKED MAN...
However, the actions of the automata were none of my business. Even if I was the one to blame for them.

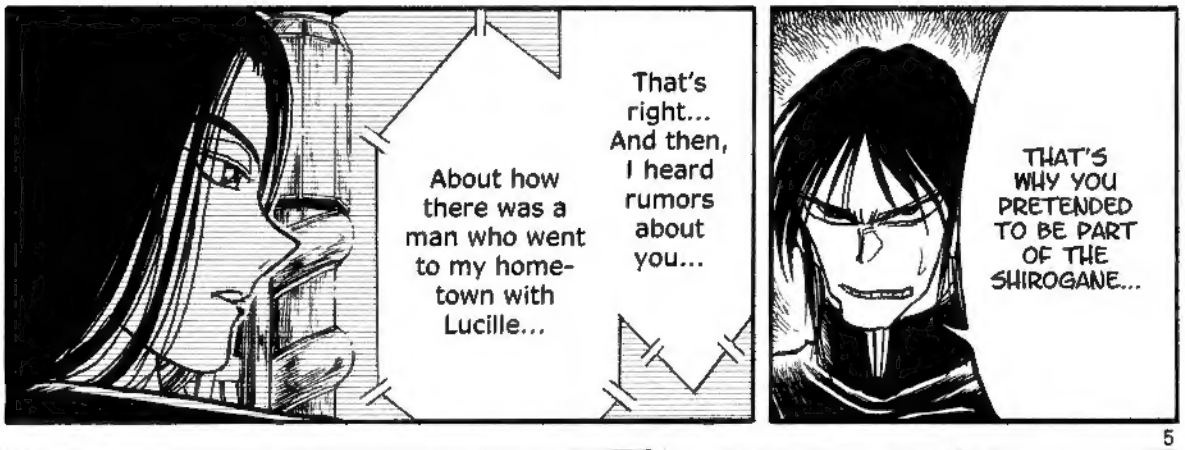

So I became interested in the method that the automata used to find it.
THE METHOD?
THE MIDNIGHT CIRCUS...
...DISCOVERED A METHOD TO FIND THE SOFT STONE!
It was to spread Zonapha Syndrome all over the world.

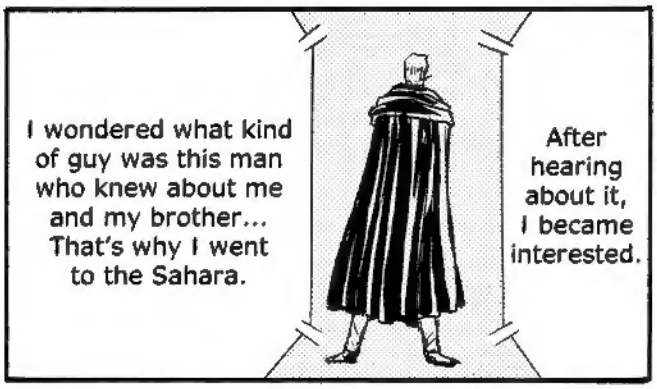

This is what the automata... specifically Les Quatre Pionniers, thought of...
The Soft Stone, which produces the elixir that can cure all illness, is hiding inside the body of a human.
And that human will never get sick because of the Stone's power.

...I SEE...
SO IF ALL THE HUMANS IN THE WORLD GOT SICK AND STOPPED MOVING...
!
Exactly, Fou.

The amount of people able to move in such a silent world would be very limited.
And if you remove the Shirogane from the equation, the last one remaining would be the bearer of the Soft Stone.


And wouldn't it be more convenient for me if I could naturally get closer to the Soft Stone by being on the human side?
Indeed, Narumi ...
THEN... THEY SPREAD ZONAPHA SYNDROME JUST BECAUSE OF THAT?!

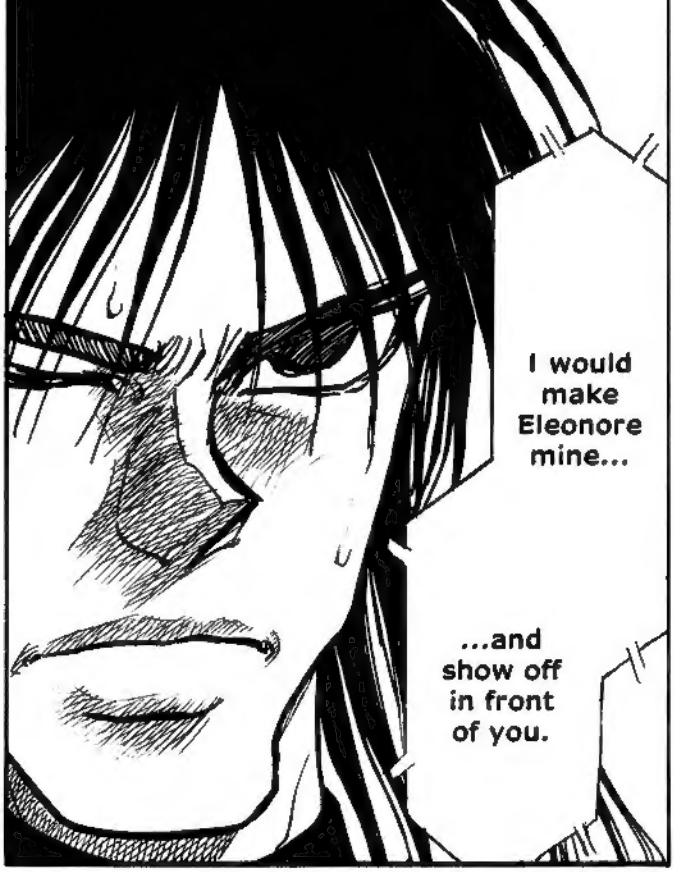

About how there was a man who went to my home-town with Lucille...
That's right... And then, I heard rumors about you...
THAT'S WHY YOU PRETENDED TO BE PART OF THE SHIROGANE...


I wondered what kind of guy was this man who knew about me and my brother... That's why I went to the Sahara.
After hearing about it, I became interested.

And how he saw the whole story of my past with my brother...

That's when I thought...

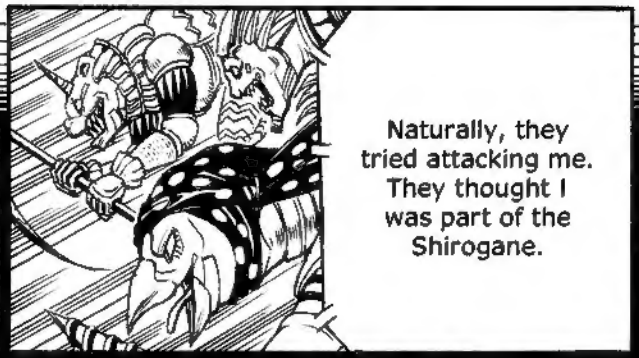
I was very surprised when I met you. Although you looked different, you had the exact same aura as my brother.


I would make Eleonore mine...
...and show off in front of you.

I could pretend you were my brother!
And then ...

Once I had met you and decided on that, I had no more business in that place. I played dead, then left the Sahara.
It wouldn't have been much fun if the "brother" I wanted to show off to had died.

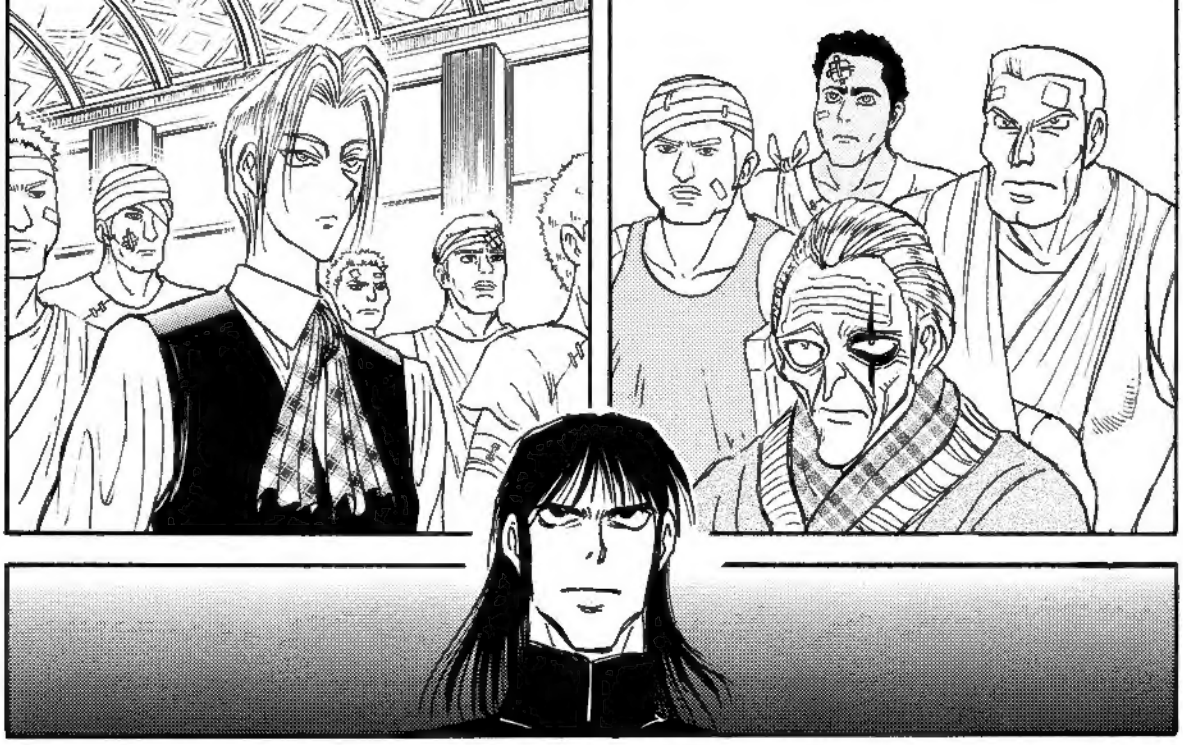
THAT'S WHY YOU SAVED ME BACK THEN...

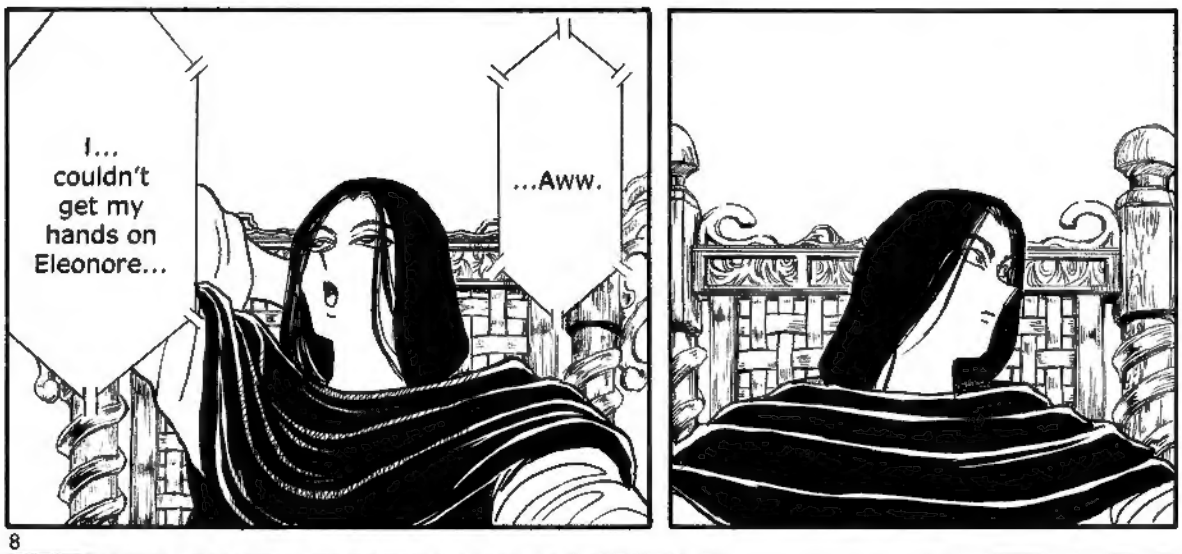

Naturally, they tried attacking me. They thought I was part of the Shirogane.

Oh, right. I needed to properly introduce myself to the dolls that I had left alone until now.

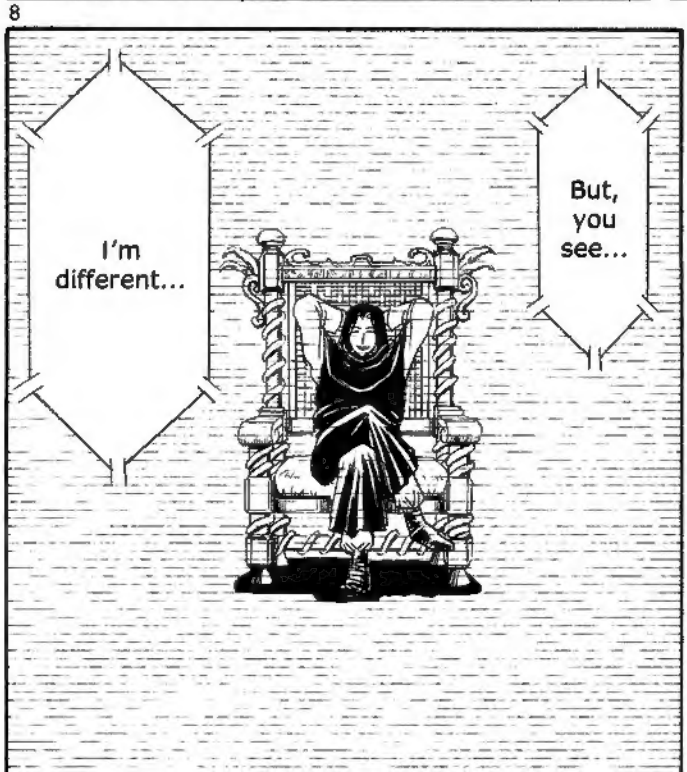
Do you remember that I was called "Faceless with Three Solutions?"
By the way, Narumi...

"I AM YOUR CREATOR, DA-YON."
And the last one. An ability that makes the dolls kneel to me with a single phrase.
DISMANTLE... DISSOLVE...
7
The dolls instantly "discern" the meaning of those words and become submissive.
KEH... WHAT A HALF-ASSED "DISCERN"...
With that, I've answered your question. Now it's time for my final announcement.




I... couldn't get my hands on Eleonore...
...Aww.

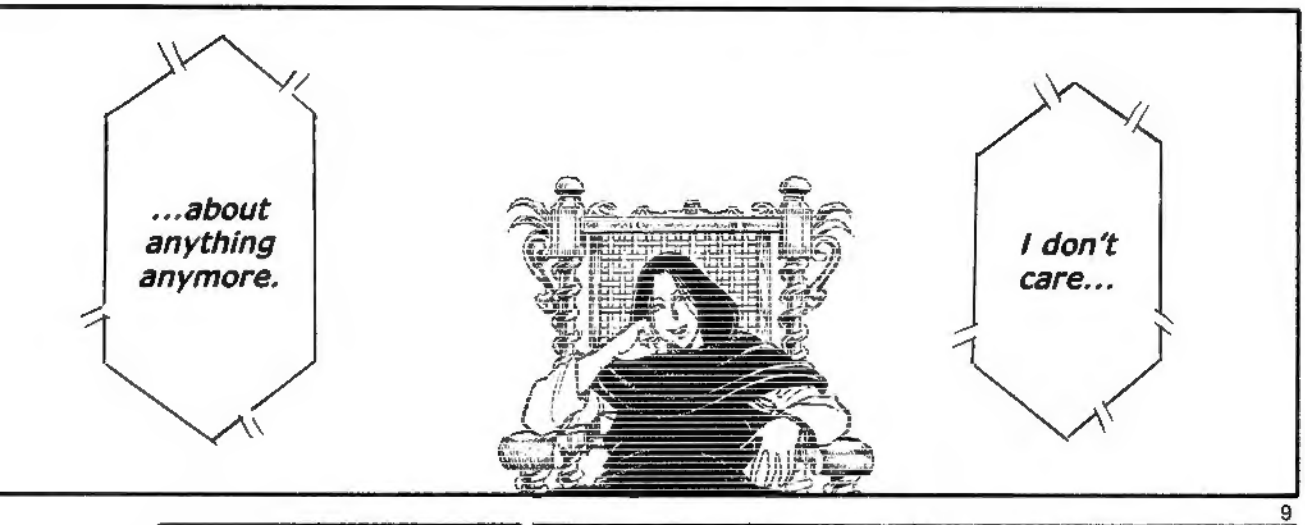
8


I'm different...
But, you see...

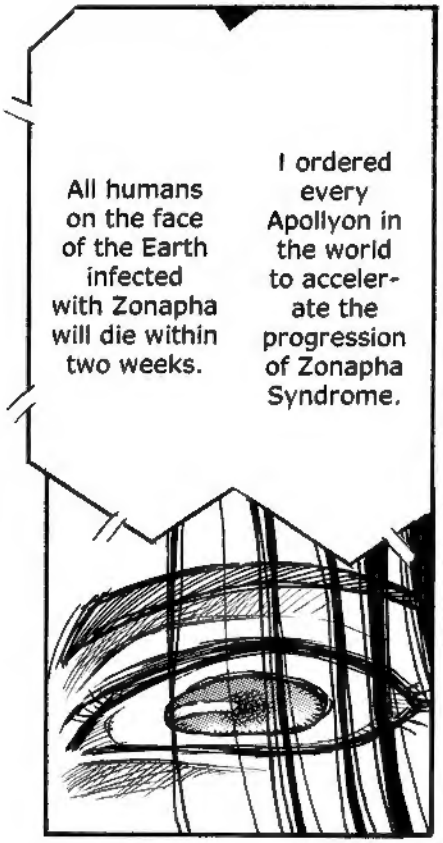
Some people do soul-searching, some try to forget, and some try to find a new love...
So, what do you think a heartbroken man has in mind?

DON'T TELL ME...

FACELESS! YOU BASTARD... WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?!

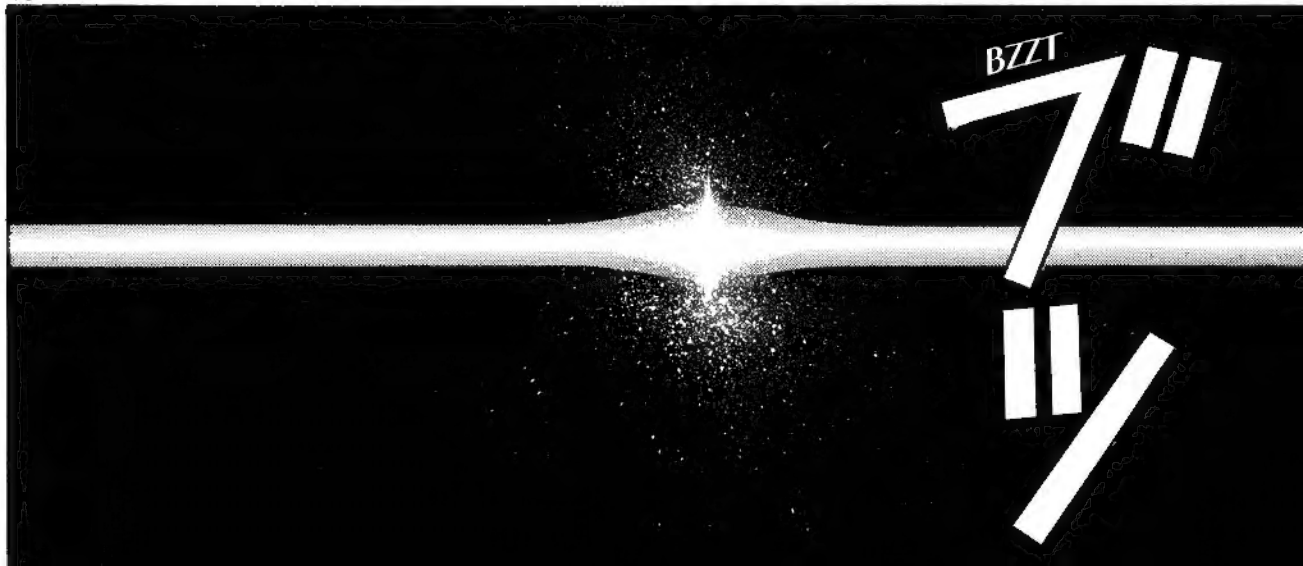

...about anything anymore.
I don't care...

9


All humans on the face of the Earth infected with Zonapha will die within two weeks.
I ordered every Apollyon in the world to accelerate the progression of Zonapha Syndrome.

...can just disappear.
This world that makes me so depressed...

God created the world in one week, right?
I'll give you double that time.
"You should've been mine."
Oh, and tell this to Eleonore:
Ain't I benevolent?
This is our eternal goodbye.
So long, everyone.


BZZT

I...
I WAS JUST TRYING TO CHANGE YOUR BANDAGE...

DON'T TOUCH ME!
CRASH.
ガシャン

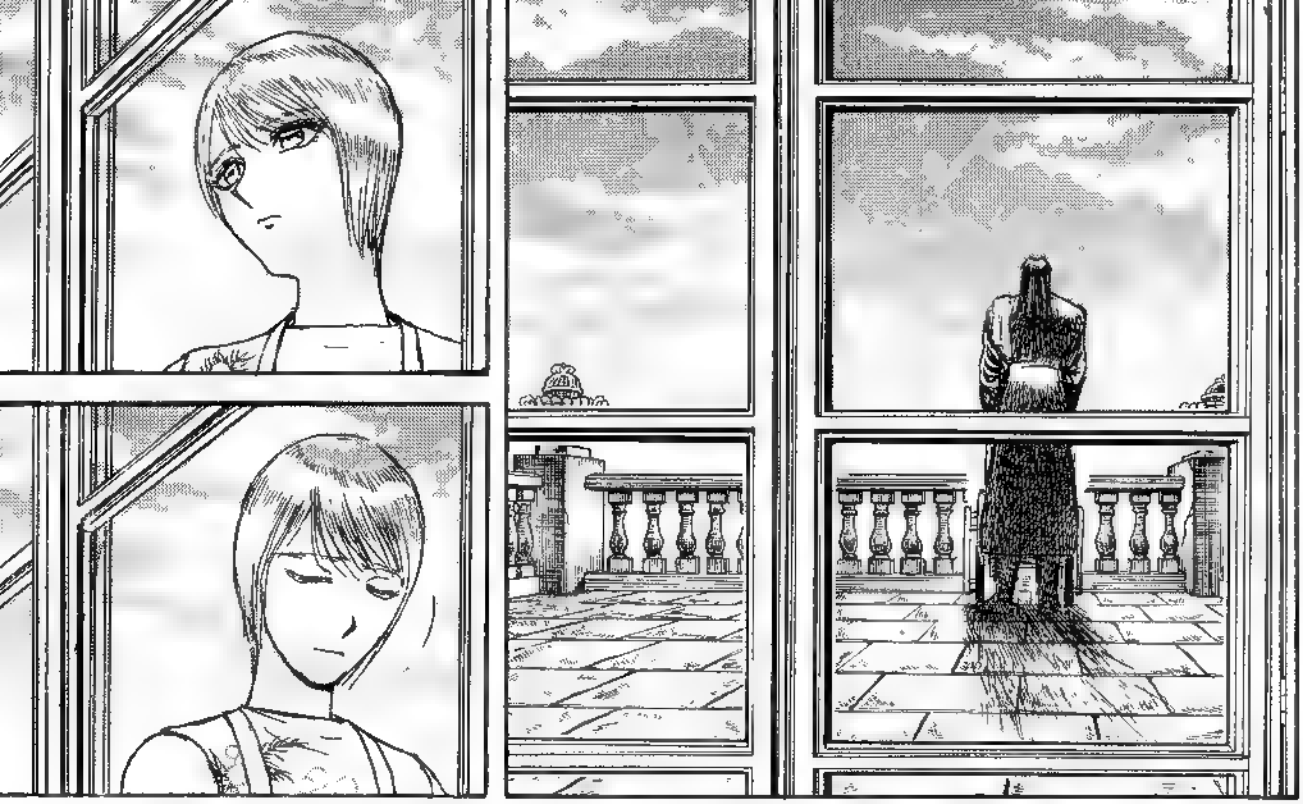
GET OUT OF HERE!
THE MAID DOLLS ARE STILL BETTER THAN YOU.

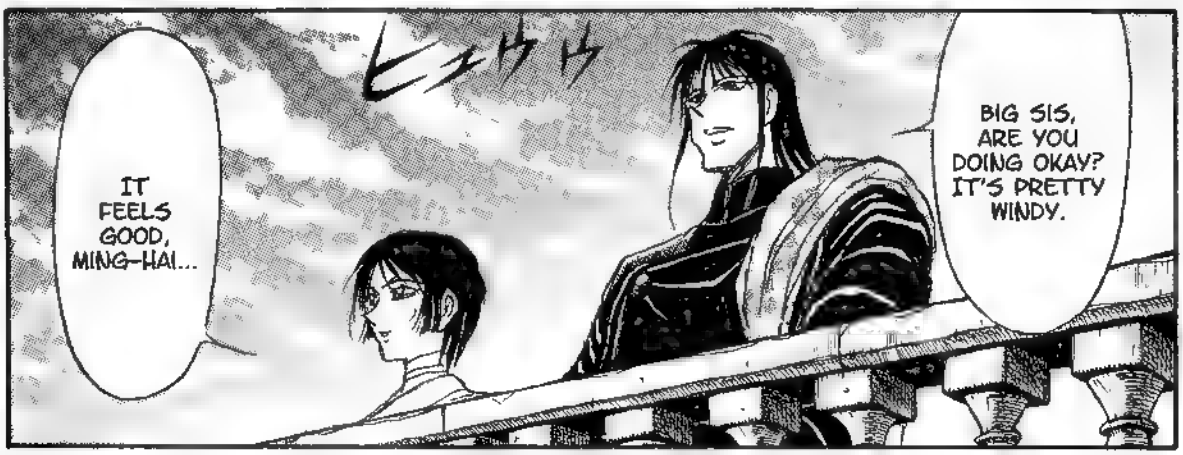
JUST BEING NEAR YOU MAKES MY BLOOD BOIL.
DON'T MAKE US LAUGH, AREN'T YOU THE REASON WHY THE WORLD IS LIKE THIS NOW?

わあー
ARE YOU PICKING A FIGHT, JAPANESE?!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? YOU CAN'T BLAME SHIROGANE FOR THAT!
NORI-SAN, HIRO-SAN, STOP IT!
...I'M SORRY... PLEASE LET ME HELP YOU SOME OTHER TIME...

SEE YOU...
SHI-ROGA-NE...

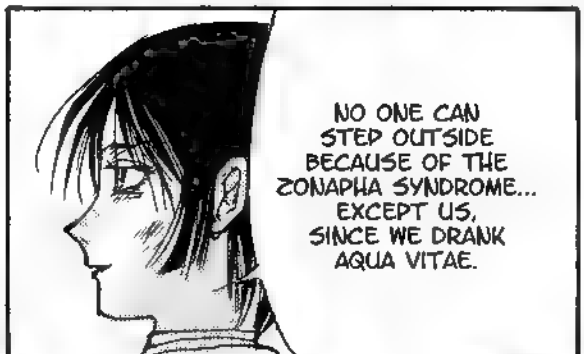
TAP
慌
張
TAP
慌
張




ヒュウウ
IT FEELS GOOD, MING-HAI...
BIG SIS, ARE YOU DOING OKAY? IT'S PRETTY WINDY.

OF COURSE, I AM.

UHUHUH... THAT MAKES ME HAPPY...
...YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ME...


NO ONE CAN STEP OUTSIDE BECAUSE OF THE ZONAPHA SYNDROME... EXCEPT US, SINCE WE DRANK AQUA VITAE.

...YOU DON'T LOOK SO WELL...

I EXPECTED THAT WOMAN TO DODGE IT... BUT... SHE DIDN'T...
HMM.

I THREW A WATER PITCHER AT HER...
YEAH.
...YOU KNOW ELE-ONORE..?

AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS SUFFERING WITH ZONAPHA SYNDROME BECAUSE FACELESS WAS AFTER HER...

THAT DOLL FOLLOWING HER KILLED MY FATHER...
...I CAN'T FORGIVE HER...

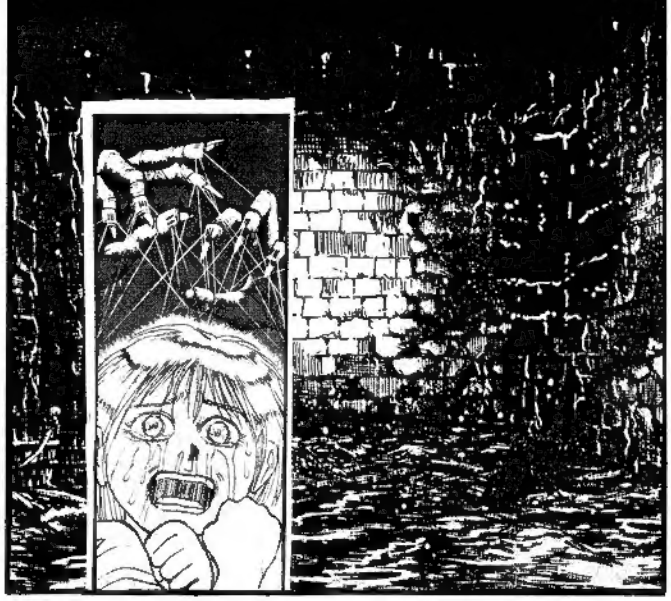
RIGHT...

R... RIGHT.

BIG SIS, I'LL SETTLE YOUR SCORE.

I WON'T ACCEPT THAT REINCARNA-TION OF AN AUTOMATON.

MISS ELE-ONORE.
LADY ERI.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU HERE...?
ALL THE SOLDIERS HATE ME... AND I SCARE THE CHILDREN AWAY...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD DO...
SO THE WORK I GAVE YOU IS CAUSING YOU TROUBLE...
OH, NO...
BUT PLEASE, DON'T HOLD IT AGAINST THE SOLDIERS...
THEY CAN'T HELP FEELING SCARED.
RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES IN THE WORLD WHO CAN MOVE, BUT THERE'S NOTHING THAT THEY CAN DO. THAT FACT PUTS THEM UNDER PRESSURE, SO THEY FEEL UNBEARABLY SCARED...
THEY'RE JUST AS FRIGHTENED AS THE CHILDREN, AND TAKE IT OUT ON YOU...
...I SEE...



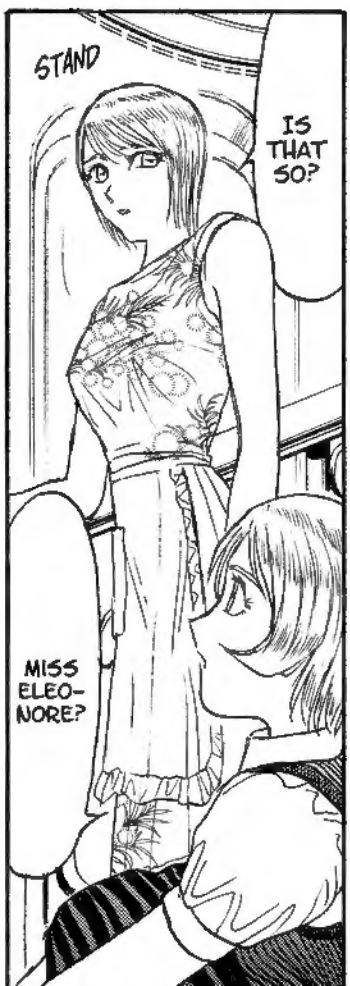
I KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE.
I'VE EXPERIENCED BEING IN A SMALL ROOM, TERRIFIED OF SOMEONE IN IT...

ME...? LET'S SEE...
SING... MAYBE...
WHAT DID YOU DO IN TIMES LIKE THAT, LADY ERI?

I KNOW, TOO.

16

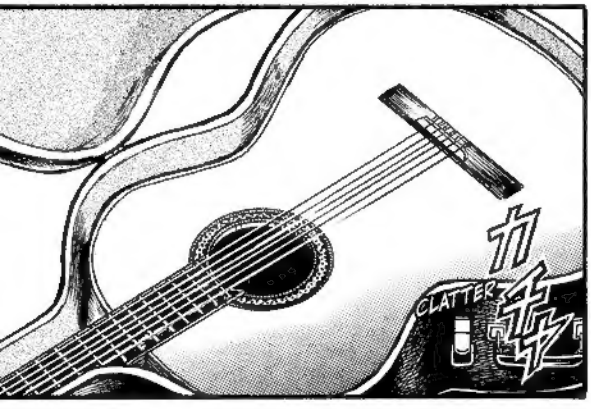
AND AS ONE, I MUST DELIGHT MY AUDIENCE.
I HAD FORGOTTEN THAT I AM A CIRCUS PERFORMER.


STAND
IS THAT SO?
MISS ELEO-NORE?

SING...?

WHEN I'D SING A SONG, IT'D MAKE ME FORGET ABOUT THE BAD THINGS AND CHEER ME UP...

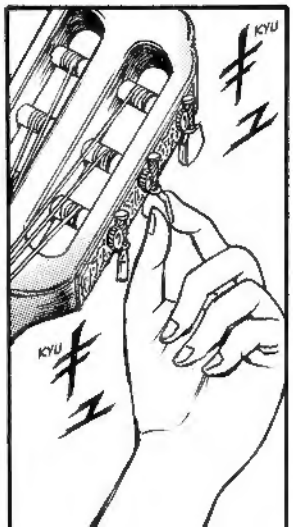
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP


CLATTER

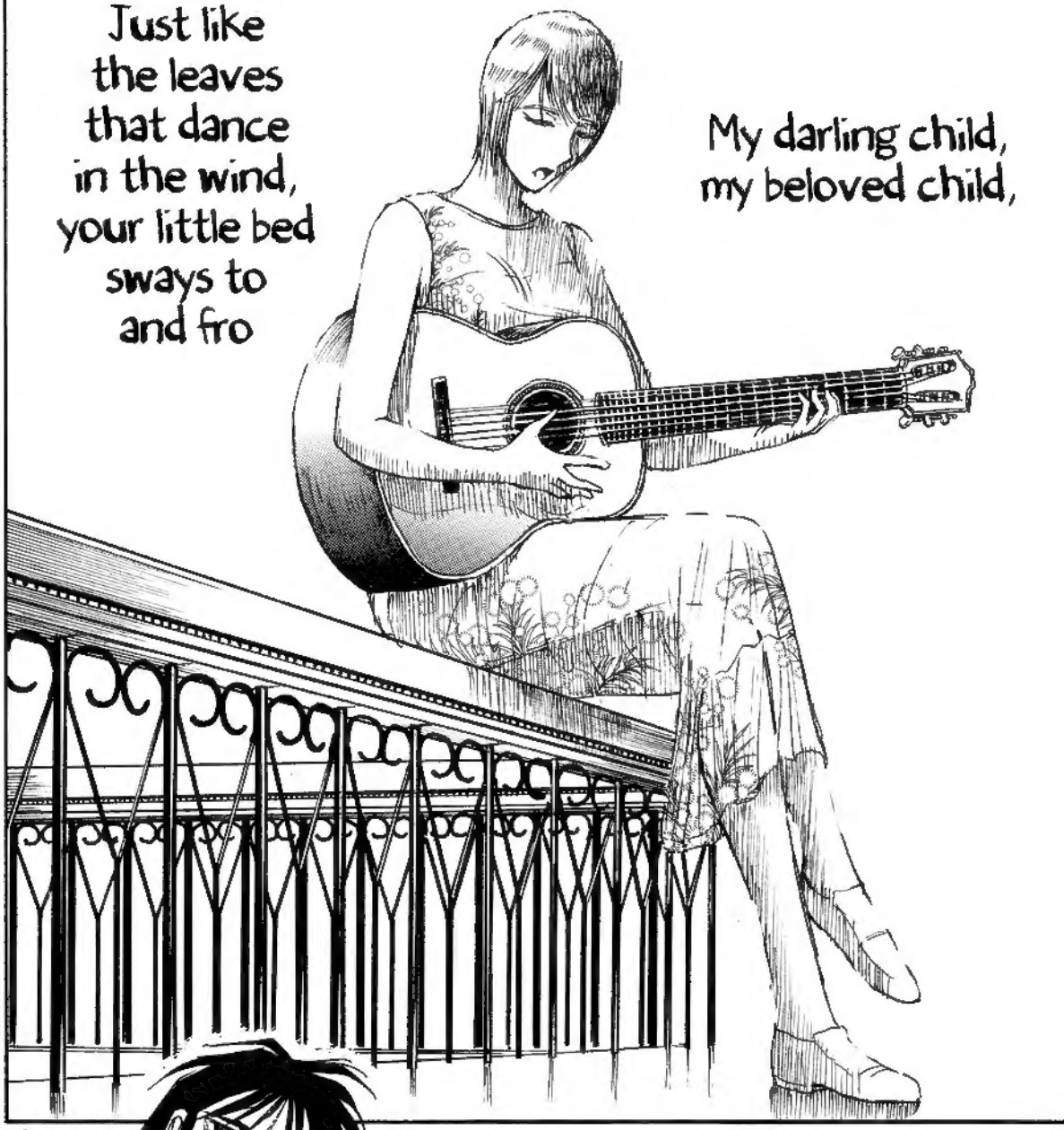
DO YOU HAVE ANY MUSICAL INSTRU-MENTS HERE?

TAP
TAP

STRUM


KYU
KYU

LADY ERI...


Just like the leaves that dance in the wind, your little bed sways to and fro
My darling child, my beloved child,

Someday, please... bestow your blessing upon all of us.
And one to each of us
Give one to this child
Heavenly Father, in thy kingdom above,